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Reps. Matsui, Eshoo, Markey and Doyle Send Letter to FCC Urging Support for Anchor Institutions

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05), a Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, sent a letter to the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Julius Genachowski, urging the FCC to address the needs of anchor institutions in reform proposals of the Universal Service Fund (USF). Matsui's efforts were joined by Energy and Commerce Communications and Technology Subcommittee Ranking Member Anna G. Eshoo (CA-14), and fellow Subcommittee Members Edward J. Markey (MA-07), and Michael F. Doyle (PA-14).

Anchor institutions – schools, libraries, and health clinics – are in need of obtaining high speed, affordable broadband service. The four signers of today's letter believe that broadband carriers receiving contributions from the USF High Cost Fund must help the anchor institutions address their unique needs, which will support both urban and rural communities.

"To better serve these institutions, the FCC should recognize the unique needs of these institutions and should consider ways to require broadband providers that receive USF support to build-out broadband networks in rural areas to deploy high-capacity broadband to anchor institutions," the Members write in their letter. "This will ensure anchor institutions have the high-speed Internet access they need to enrich their communities and stimulate economic growth across the nation."

John Windhausen, Executive Director of the Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition said, "The SHLB Coalition is extremely pleased that these Members of Congress support high-capacity broadband for anchor institutions in rural areas, as high-capacity

broadband is essential to increasing educational opportunities, telemedicine and economic growth in rural America.”

“Simply put, expanding broadband access is vitally important to the future of our country,” Congresswoman Matsui added. “Our country’s innovation and global competitiveness depend on a greater number of Americans having access to the Internet.”

A copy of the signed letter is available [here](#) .

The text of the letter is as follows:

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We commend the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on its efforts to ensure that all Americans have access to broadband services. As the FCC considers adopting an order to reform the Universal Service Fund’s high-cost fund, we urge you to address the unique needs of community anchor institutions that depend on affordable, high-capacity broadband.

Community anchor institutions provide essential services to their communities, especially to the vulnerable and “at-risk” members of the population. Community anchor institutions also play an important role for our nation’s seniors, often providing their primary means for accessing the Internet.

Anchor institutions – which include libraries, schools, community colleges and 4-year colleges, health care centers, community media, public safety, and many other anchors – require high-capacity broadband networks to fulfill their missions. These institutions are engaged in some of our most important national priorities – education, economic development, health and wellness, job training and support, and access to e-government services, among many others.

We understand that the FCC may require broadband providers to serve anchor institutions. Most community anchor institutions operate 10, 50, or even 200 computers at a time, all sharing the same broadband connection. To better serve these institutions, the FCC should recognize the unique needs of these institutions and should consider ways to require broadband providers that receive USF support to build-out broadband networks in rural areas to deploy high-capacity broadband to anchor institutions. This will ensure anchor institutions have the high-speed Internet access they need to enrich their communities and stimulate economic growth across the nation.

Again, we urge the FCC to remain mindful of the unique needs of America's anchor institutions as you consider how to reform the Universal Service Fund program. Thank you for your attention to these important issues.

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